

Message Text

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67

ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SCA-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00
USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 SNM-02
DEAE-00 JUSE-00 /057 W

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O 092129Z DEC 76 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9103

UNCLAS MEXICO 15536

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MX

SUBJECT: PRISONER HUNGER STRIKE IN MEXICO CITY: SITREP 2

REF: MEXICO 15436

1. SUMMARY: WHILE PRISON DIRECTORS STILL PROTEST TO CONOFFS THAT NO STRIKE IS GOING ON, IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT A LARGE PROPORTION OF THE AMERICAN PRISONERS IN MEXICO AND ACAPULCO (SEE SEPTTEL), AS WELL AS SOME OTHER FOREIGNERS AND EVEN SOME MEXICANS ARE PARTICIPATING IN A HUNGER STRIKE. CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS IN THE UNITED STATES, HOWEVER, WE HAVE HEARD OF NO INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE FROM THE AMERICAN PRISONERS WHO HAVE BEEN SEEN WITHIN THE LAST DAY. THE CAUSE OF THE STRIKE IS THE FAILURE OF MEXICAN OFFICIALS TO KEEP WHAT THE PRISONERS HAVE REGARDED AS A PROMISE THAT THEY WOULD BE OUT OF PRISON BY DECEMBER 1 AS A RESULT OF THE PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION MAKING DRUG OFFENDERS ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE. A REPORT OF THE LATEST INFORMATION THE EMBASSY HAS AVAILABLE ON EACH PRISON FOLLOWS. END SUMMARY.

2. SANTA MARTA PENITENTIARY, MEXICO CITY, WAS VISITED ON THE AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 8 BY SCA ADMINISTRATOR WALENTYNOWICZ, SCS DIRECTOR GISE, CONSUL GENERAL MCANINCH, A& D CHIEF ANTHONY PERKINS, AND CONGRESSIONAL STAFF DEL MEMEBERS JOHN HOLSTINE, UNCLASSIFIED

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MICHAEL FINLEY AND ROBERT DOCKERY. A MAJORITY OF

THE AMERICAN PRISONERS AT SANTA MARTA HAVE BEEN, OR CLAIM TO HAVE BEEN, ON A HUNGER STRIKE SINCE DECEMBER 4, IN SPITE OF DENIALS BY PRISON DIRECTOR BARQUERA THAT A STRIKE IS CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS. ALL OF THE PRISONERS TO WHOM THE VISITORS TALKED WERE EXTREMELY BITTER TOWARD THE MEXICANS, BUT NONE OF THEM SUGGESTED THAT ANY VIOLENCE HAD OCCURRED. THEY ARE PREPARING A PETITION FOR MEXICAN OFFICIALS URGING THAT PAROLE FOR DRUG OFFENDERS BE PASSED BY THE MEXICAN CONGRESS.

3. LOS REYES WOMEN'S PRISON WAS VISITED LATER ON DECEMBER 8 BY THE SAME GROUP. THE PRISON HAS APPARENTLY BEEN QUOT SINCE THE DEMONSTRATIONS OF DECEMBER FIRST AND SECOND, AND NO ORGANIZED STRIKE WAS IN EVIDENCE. A NUMBER OF THE AMERICAN WOMEN SAID THEY WERE, HOWEVER, OBSERVING BEGIN QUOTE VOLUNTARY FASTS END QUOTE IN SYMPATHY WITH THE STRIKERS, THOUGH THEY WERE NOT ATTEMPTING TO PUBLICIZE THEM.

4. RECLUSORIO PREVENTIVO NORTE WAS LAST VISITED ON DECEMBER 7, AT WHICH TIME THE TEN AMERICAN PRISONERS THERE TOLD THE CONOFF THAT THEY HAD NOT YET DECIDED TO JOIN THE STRIKE. THERE WERE LOCAL RADIO REPORTS ON DECEMBER 8 THAT ALL OF THE PRISONERS, AMERICAN AND MEXICAN, AND EVEN THE GUARDS, HAD GONE ON STRIKE AGAINST THE BEGIN QUOTE UNPOPULAR END QUOTE PRISON DIRECTOR, ANTONIO SANCHO GALINDEZ. TELEPHONE CALLS FROM THE EMBASSY TO THE PRISON ELICITED DENIALS FROM THE PRISON ADMINISTRATION THAT A STRIKE WAS GOING ON. A CONSULAR OFFICER IS VISITING NORTE TODAY.

5. RECLUSORIO PREVENTIVO ORIENTE: CONOFF SPOKE BY PHONE ON DECEMBER 9 WITH PRISON DIRECTOR'S PRIVATE SECRETARY, JUAN PABLO DE TAVIRA, WHO SAID THAT SEVERAL AMERICAN PRISONERS HAD APPROACHED HIM PREVIOUS DAY TO CONFIRM THAT THEY WERE ON HUNGER STRIKE AND HAD BEEN SINCE DECEMBER 4.

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DE TAVIRA SAID AMERICANS CLAIMED THAT ALL DRUG OFFENDERS WHO WOULD STAND TO BENEFIT FROM STALLED PAROLE LEGISLATION WERE PARTICIPATING, INCLUDING OTHER FOREIGN AND MEXICAN PRISONERS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, PAROLE, PRISONERS WELFARE, PENAL INSTITUTIONS, LEGISLATIVE BILLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MEXICO15536
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760455-0665
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761258/aaaabyhb.tel
Line Count: 112
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SCSE
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MEXICO 15436
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: wolfsd
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUN 2004 by hattaycs>; APPROVED <03 AUG 2004 by wolfsd>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRISONER HUNGER STRIKE IN MEXICO CITY: SITREP 2
TAGS: CASC, MX
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006